

Message

From: Hubbard, Joseph [Hubbard.Joseph@epa.gov]
Sent: 7/1/2019 11:46:02 AM
To: Edlund, Carl [Edlund.Carl@epa.gov]; Villarreal, Chris [villarreal.chris@epa.gov]; Meyer, John [Meyer.John@epa.gov]; Carroll, Craig [Carroll.Craig@epa.gov]; Coats, Janetta [coats.janetta@epa.gov]; Fife, Greg [fife.greg@epa.gov]; Petersen, Chris [petersen.chris@epa.gov]; Bokun, Lisa [Bokun.Lisa@epa.gov]; Taheri, Diane [Taheri.Diane@epa.gov]; Balandran, Olivia-R [balandran.olivia-r@epa.gov]
CC: Durant, Jennah [Durant.Jennah@epa.gov]
Subject: EPA and the City respond to radioactive material discovered in Gert Town

<https://www.fox8live.com/2019/06/28/epa-city-respond-radioactive-material-discovered-gert-town/>

EPA and the City respond to radioactive material discovered in Gert Town

Kimberly Curth

NEW ORLEANS, La. (WVUE) - We're hearing from the Environmental Protection Agency about radioactive material discovered in Gert Town. This as crews began removing bins of the material Friday.

In an e-mail Friday afternoon, an EPA spokesperson told Fox 8:

"EPA, working with the city of New Orleans, removed radioactive material from beneath Lowerline Street in New Orleans, La. Excavation of the material finished on June 3. During the removal, radiation monitors, perimeter monitors, and dust samples did not detect elevated readings outside the immediate excavation area. EPA shared information with community leaders and nearby residents during the removal. Mobile air monitoring throughout the area, along with radiological surveys of the surrounding streets, has not detected radiation levels of concern. Excavated material was also sampled, and packaged in special containers designed to securely store radioactive material. Two containers were shipped to an appropriate disposal facility on Friday, June 28, and the rest will be shipped next week. After all the containers have shipped, EPA will again monitor throughout the neighborhood to assure the safety of area residents."

The bins with radioactive material inside have sat near homes on Lowerline and Coolidge in Gert Town for weeks now. But, Friday morning crews began removing some of them. The radioactive waste was only recently removed from under the road's surface even though it was discovered six years ago. The City has said it was notified about the radiation-producing material in 2013 while planning for the Super Bowl that year.

Now, an attorney representing neighbors and Sewerage and Water Board workers says more than a thousand people have signed on to the Federal class action lawsuit against the city and the remediation company that did the work.

"I was out there this morning, two trucks were removed, I was told they were going to Texas. I hope somebody told Texas but the way this thing is going you don't know," said the plaintiff's attorney Madro Bandaries.

In a statement to Fox 8 Friday, the city says:

"This administration has been clear. Our goal is always to protect the health and safety of residents. This community has historically experienced environmental challenges, and it was imperative for us to address this immediately. Upon learning of the presence of the underground materials in 2018, this administration took immediate action by notifying residents prior to safely removing the material in close coordination with the appropriate federal and state partners. Due to the scope of the work necessary to protect health and safety, EPA assumed oversight of project operations. The City has been in constant communication with federal and state partners to push for safe and expedient removal and these agencies have been continually monitoring and have not reported any increased risk to the public during removal. The EPA has informed us the remaining containers will be removed next week. For further questions or concerns about the removal, call EPA Region 6 External Affairs at (214) 665-2200 or r6press@epa.gov"

Copyright 2019 WVUE. All rights reserved.

Cheers,

Joe Hubbard
Office of External Affairs, Region 6
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
OFFICE: [214-665-8476](tel:214-665-8476)
Hubbard.joseph@epa.gov